

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 09521

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, AG

SUBJECT: INITIAL QUAI IMPRESSIONS OF GISCARD VISIT TO
ALGERIA

REF: ALGIERS 946

1. OUR INITIAL READ-OUT ON GISCARD'S VISIT TO ALGIERS WITH QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA DE WARREN COULD BE SUMMARIZED BY THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF REFTEL. WARREN, TOO, STATED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE VISIT WAS MUCH BETTER THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED. RATHER THAN SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WHICH HE SAID WERE FEW, HE UNDERLINED THE BENEFICENT PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE VISIT WHICH SHOULD EVENTUALLY "CHANGE HEARTS AND MINDS ON BOTH SIDES, REDUCING ALGERIAN RESENTMENT TOWARDS FRANCE AND FRENCH RACIST ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALGERIA".

2. WARREN SAID THAT A "CURRENT" HAD PASSED BETWEEN BOUMEDIENE AND GISCARD WHO GAINED A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF BOUMEDIENE'S POSITIONS. AS A RESULT, FUTURE MISUNDERSTANDINGS SHOULD BE MORE EASILY AVOIDABLE. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO FRANCE, HE CONTINUED, BECAUSE OF ALGERIA'S POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE CONSEQUENT INDISPENSIBILITY OF CLOSE CONTACT. WARREN ALSO RE-
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FERRED (WEAKLY) TO THE VALUE OF KEEPING ALGERIA "OUT OF SOVIET HANDS" AND OF "TAMING" ITS LEADERS. HE FELT THAT

THE VISIT HAD GAINED PRESTIGE FOR GISCARD BOTH IN ALGERIA AND AMONG THE OPPOSITION IN FRANCE.

3. REPLYING TO A QUESTION, WARREN INDICATED THAT THE REPORTED AGREEMENT BETWEEN FRANCE AND ALGERIA TO TAKE A COMMON ATTITUDE TOWARD A PROPOSED AGENDA AT THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE ON ENERGY WAS A "DECLARATION OF A COMMON INTENTION" AND A REAFFIRMATION OF THE WILL TO COMPROMISE RATHER THAN CONFRONT". HE AFFIRMED THAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO HELP NEGOTIATIONS AT THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE, BUT THEN RELUCTANTLY ADMITTED THAT IN FACT, ALGERIA DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE BUDGED FROM ITS INITIAL POSITIONS THERE.

4. ON THE BILATERAL PLANE, WARREN SAID THAT PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF ALGERIAN WORKERS IN FRANCE (TECHNICAL TRAINING, SCHOOLING IN ARABIC, BETTER HOUSING) WERE RENEWED AND THAT THE FRENCH "HOPE" THERE WILL BE A LOOSENING OF RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS HELD BY FRENCHMEN IN ALGERIA. HE CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW THE DETAILS OF ANY POSSIBLE NEW AGREEMENTS CONCERNING ALGERIAN WINE, GAS AND OIL SALES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANS-MEDITERRANEAN PIPELINE FOR GAS, ALL OF WHICH WERE DISCUSSED BY THE TWO PRESIDENTS.

5. COMMENT: WE CONCUR IN THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF REFTEL. WE WOULD ADD THAT THE COINCIDENCE OF THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE WITH GISCARD'S VISIT COMPLICATED HIS TASK. ON THE ONE HAND, HE SOUGHT THROUGH RHETORICAL SUPPORT OF A NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER TO RETAIN THE IMAGE OF FRANCE AS ALGERIA'S AND THE THIRD WORLD'S BEST FRIEND IN THE WEST. ON THE OTHER, HE HOPED TO PROMOTE A SUCCESSFUL PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. UNABLE TO ACHIEVE BOTH AIMS, GISCARD PROBABLY CONSIDERS THAT HE AT LEAST ACCOMPLISHED THE FIRST AND MORE IMPORTANT ONE.
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